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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 15 July 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a position paper in connection with the candidature of the Russian Federation for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016 at the elections to be held in November 2013 in New York at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 115 (c) entitled "Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: Election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council".

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

* A/68/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 15 July 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Position paper in connection with the candidature of the Russian Federation for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016

The Russian Federation is a party to the overwhelming majority of the core international human rights treaties. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, the Russian Federation is a party to a number of optional protocols to the above treaties that provide an opportunity to examine individual communications concerning violations.

The international human rights treaties ratified by the Russian Federation are an integral part of its legal system. During its membership in the Human Rights Council, the Russian Federation became a party to a number of key instruments in this field. In 2008, the Russian Federation ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. In 2011, the Russian Federation acceded to the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. In 2012, the Russian Federation ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and acceded to the Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, and in 2013 it ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

The Russian Federation has no substantive reservations to the international human rights treaties to which it is a party.

The Russian Federation intends to expand the range of its international human rights obligations, taking into consideration their financial implications and the need to adapt its domestic legislation and practice.

The Russian Federation submits reports to the human rights treaty bodies in a timely manner and pays special attention to the implementation of their recommendations. Within the framework of the General Assembly, it has initiated an intergovernmental negotiating process on strengthening the work of the human rights treaty bodies that is aimed at enhancing their effective functioning.

The Russian Federation will continue to cooperate constructively with the human rights treaty bodies in the context of fulfilling its international human rights obligations.

The Russian Federation cooperates with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council on an ongoing basis. At the invitation of Russian authorities, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples visited the country in 2009; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises visited in 2010; the Special Representative on violence against children visited in 2011; and the Special Rapporteur on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights visited in 2012. In April 2013, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers paid her second visit to the Russian Federation. A visit of the Working Group on business and human rights is scheduled for autumn 2013.

The Russian Federation pays particular attention to inquiries by the special procedures of the Human Rights Council in connection with alleged human rights violations. Each inquiry is examined by the relevant Russian authorities, which provide detailed substantive comments, as necessary.

The Russian Federation is of the view that the interaction between States and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council should be based on voluntary and constructive cooperation and that the special procedures should work in strict compliance with their mandates and with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 5/2 and approved by the General Assembly.

The Russian Federation will continue to develop its cooperation with the thematic special procedures of the Human Rights Council in order to achieve better compliance with its human rights obligations.

The Russian Federation actively cooperates with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ms. Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, visited the Russian Federation in 2011. Since 2006, the Russian Federation has made an annual voluntary contribution of $2 million to the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In 2007, the Russian Federation and the Office signed a framework agreement on cooperation, under which the post of the Office's Senior Human Rights Adviser in Moscow was established.

The Russian Federation will continue to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by supporting its programmes and projects in line with the international human rights priorities of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation considers the universal periodic review to be one of the key instruments of international human rights monitoring. The Russian Federation has undergone review twice — in 2009 and 2013.

At the twenty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, the Russian delegation will outline its position on the recommendations received at the sixteenth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review.

The Russian Federation will continue its active cooperation with the universal periodic review mechanism, focusing on the implementation of accepted recommendations and advocating for the constructive and depoliticized nature of the review.

In international forums and in its domestic policy, the Russian Federation places a particular focus on countering racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia

and related intolerance. A significant portion of the Russian Federation's voluntary contribution to the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights goes to combating discrimination.

Russian law prohibits any form of restriction on the rights of citizens on social, racial, gender, ethnic, linguistic, religious or any other grounds, which precludes the emergence of discriminatory policies against particular groups of citizens. Discrimination is subject to criminal and administrative prosecution.

Each year the Russian Federation sponsors a resolution in the General Assembly entitled "Glorification of Nazism: inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

With the active support of the Russian Federation, the Durban Review Conference was held in Geneva in 2009. Its outcome document developed and supplemented the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001.

In the Human Rights Council, the Russian Federation will continue to give priority to the issue of international efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Russian Federation devotes considerable attention to combating human trafficking — a modern-day global threat as dangerous to society as the illicit drug trade and terrorism. The Russian Federation is a party to the international legal instruments on human trafficking concluded under the auspices of the United Nations. It participated actively in the elaboration of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons adopted by the General Assembly on 30 July 2010.

The Russian Federation cooperates with its partners in the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking and participates in the meetings of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons within the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and in the development of the Working Group's recommendations.

Considerable attention is paid to the financing of activities to combat trafficking. The amount of $200,000 out of the Russian Federation's voluntary contribution to the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for 2010-2011 was allocated to projects at the International Training Centre in Minsk on training, advanced training and retraining of personnel in the area of migration and combating trafficking in persons. It was also decided to allocate $30,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons.

The Russian Federation will continue to make a significant contribution to the development of international cooperation to combat human trafficking.

The Russian Federation believes that the foundation for the human rights dimension of United Nations activities and for the international community's human rights efforts as a whole should be the principle of equitable cooperation among States based on respect for their sovereignty.

The Russian Federation will seek to ensure that the work of the Human Rights Council is conducted in accordance with the principle of equitable and respectful cooperation.

The Russian delegation is working to advance the issue of business and human rights in the Human Rights Council. It is a member of the Group of Friends on the relevant Council resolution. A portion of its voluntary contribution to the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights goes to fund related activities and it is involved in organizing and holding regional consultations.

The Russian Federation is working actively at the international level to achieve the truly universal enjoyment of human rights. The Human Rights Council initiative on traditional values and human rights serves this purpose. We believe that our focus on the interconnection between traditional values and human rights will strengthen recognition of and respect for human rights within societies.

At the initiative of the Russian Federation, the Human Rights Council adopts by consensus its resolutions on "Human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality" and "Integrity of the judicial system". Moreover, the Russian Federation initiated the establishment of the Working Group on the review of work and functioning of the Human Rights Council, which led to the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, laying the foundation for the future functioning of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. It also actively participated in the General Assembly's review of the status of the Human Rights Council and voted in favour of the related resolution.

The Russian Federation will play an active part in the work of the Human Rights Council and make a significant contribution to the development of its activities on various fronts for the promotion and protection of human rights.